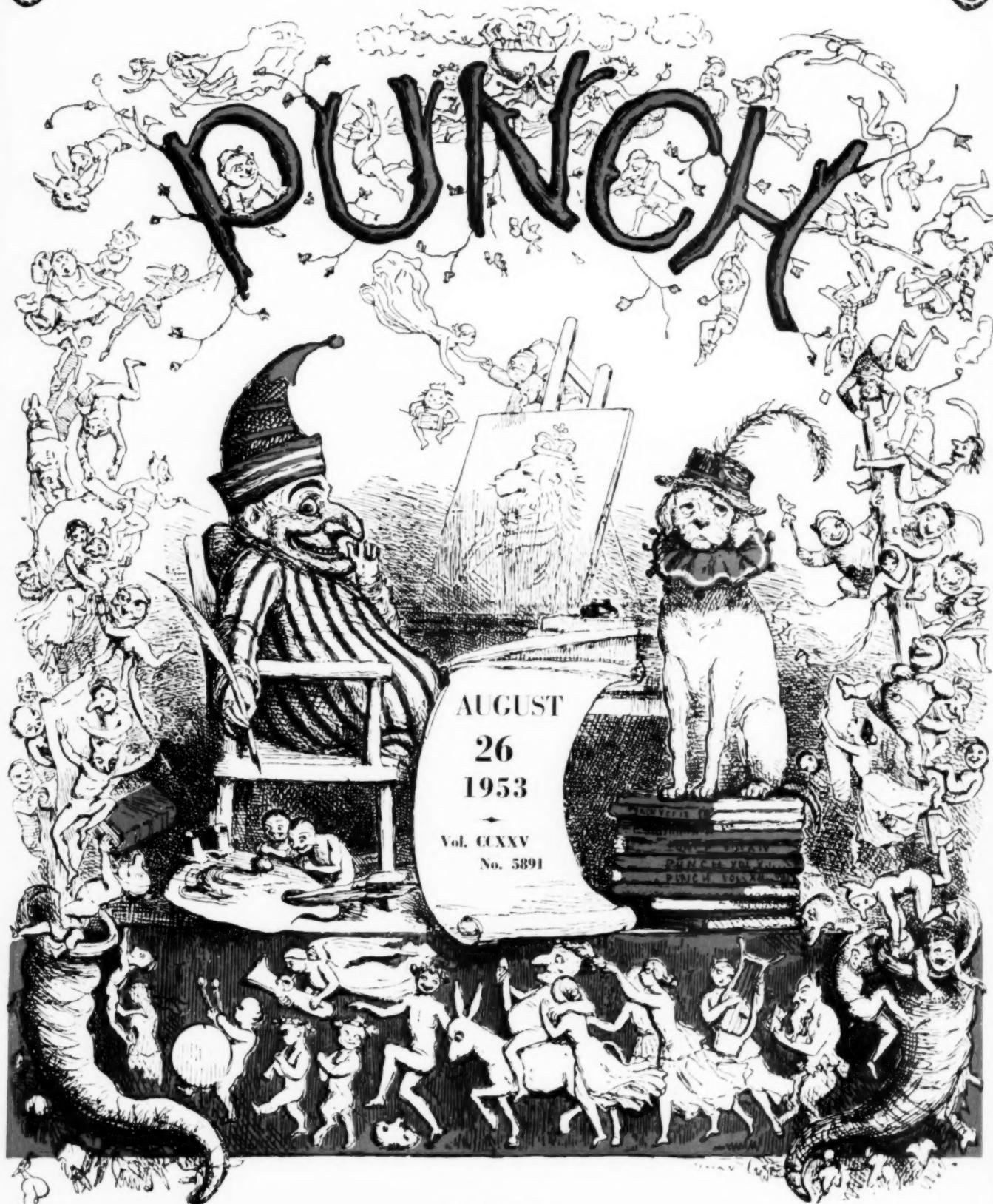


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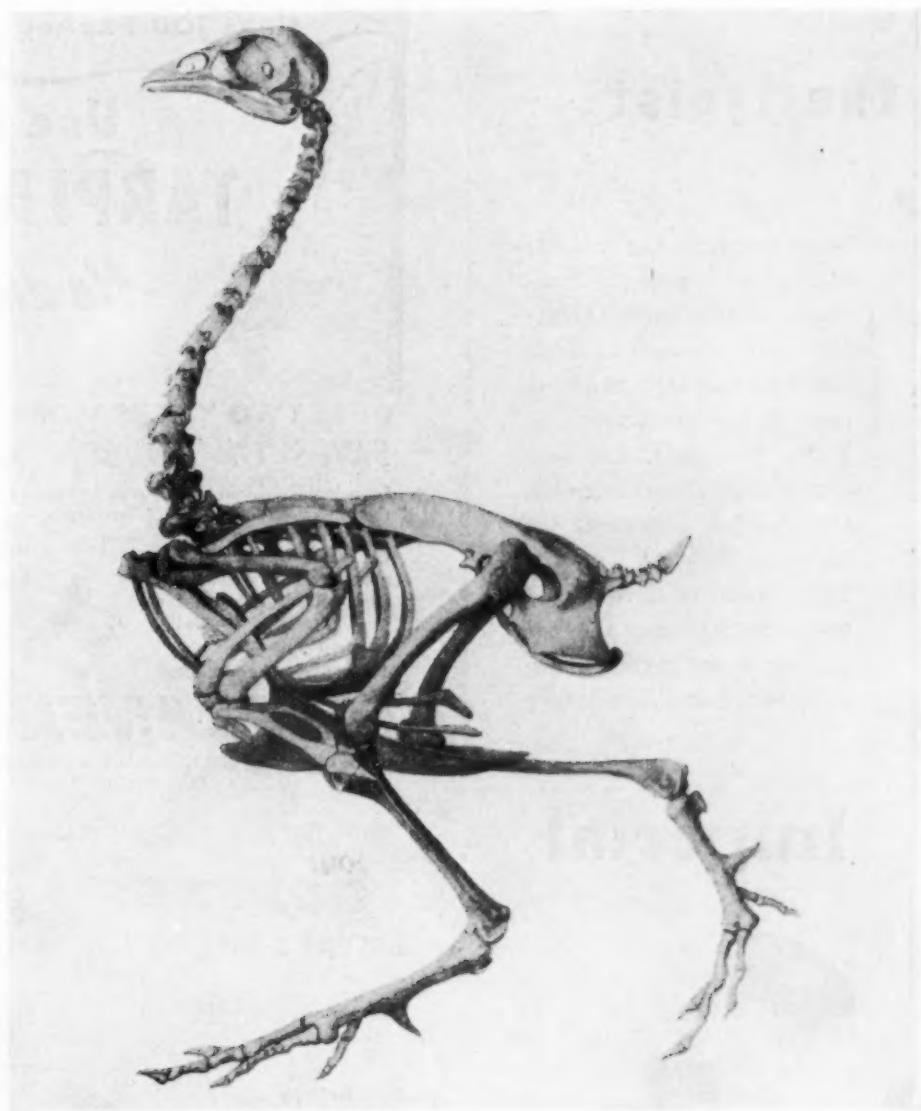
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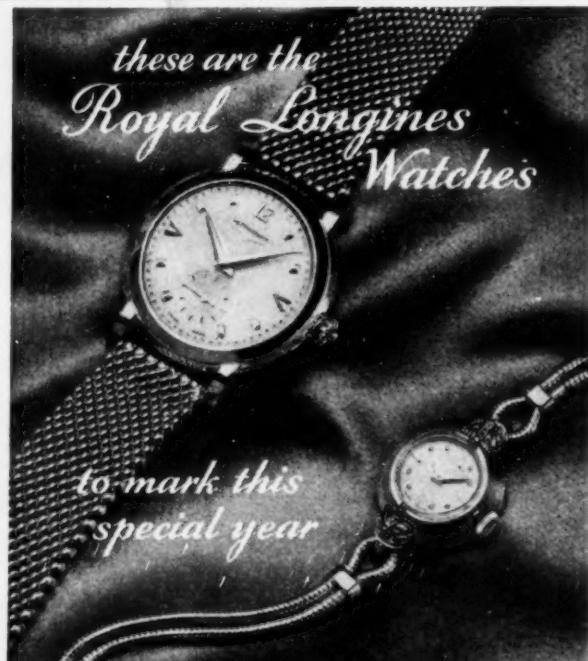
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Like a tortoise under a flower-pot?

"Preparing to shave the other day," said the efficiency expert, "my methods suddenly reminded me of a tortoise under a flower-pot — laborious and ill-directed. There I was, fumbling the paper off my razor blade as if the Gillette Dispenser had never been invented. Now I've streamlined my shaving. I buy my Blue Gillette Blades in a Dispenser. To save time, they're ready unwrapped and load in a flash. To save trouble when they are finished with, there's an old-blade container to take them. The Gillette Dispenser certainly demonstrates the advantages of progress."





CHARIVARIA

"THEY said Stanley Matthews would never get a Cup medal," observes the *Evening Standard*. "They said Gordon Richards would never win the Derby. They said England could not win the Ashes. But all these things have happened this crowning year. What next?" Perhaps a win for Anglo-Iranian?



Russian propagandists are now claiming that in the spheres of music, literature and art the U.S.S.R. produces more child prodigies than any other nation. Once Russian musicians, writers and artists get thoroughly steeped in this idea they will be spared a sense of thwarted ambition should circumstances rob them of a ripe old age.

When the pre-war "white" loaf comes on sale again on August 31, an order from the Ministry of Food will compel millers to add nicotine, iron and vitamin B1 to the flour in addition to the chalk which is already added. Some millers feel that if the present rate of progress is maintained the Ministry may ultimately be able to do away with the flour altogether.

The current passion for entertainment by question and answer has now spread to the world of advertising. "Have you ever danced with your shoes off?" is the first of twelve searching questions being put to the great lipstick-consuming public; and, a little later on, "Do you secretly hope the next man you meet will be a psychiatrist?" Examinees answering "No, a chiropodist" are disqualified.

The correspondence columns of the *Daily Telegraph* have been giving a lot of space recently to readers' accounts of animals laughing. Perhaps more animals would be seen laughing if they could only read the correspondence columns of the *Daily Telegraph*.

Residents of Lytham St. Annes, near Blackpool, are reported by the *Daily Herald* to be annoyed by "breakfast odours created by campers frying on the sandhills." That's the worst of these sudden spells of hot weather.



An Italian delegate to the World Youth Festival in Bucharest epitomized the feelings of all concerned when he exclaimed "Friendship with Soviet youth is stronger than any hydrogen bomb!" The new party line is reported to be that it is better to fellow-travel hopefully than to arise.

The French Minister of Transport has explained to transport and railway workers that the new decrees do not involve raising the retirement age above fifty-five for workers in jobs "liable to entail premature exhaustion."

French Prime Ministers, for example, should not be affected.



An American visitor writes to an evening paper to say that he ordered a pot of tea on a British train but the steward never brought it. Some recognition is to be made by the British Travel and Holidays Association of the steward's efforts for Anglo-American friendship.



If for nothing else, Professor Arnold Toynbee deserves the world's gratitude for plucking the chair away from under that weighty fallacy "The Unchanging East." It changes like mad, and refusal to face that fact, belief in the changelessness of life outside Europe, has caused much of the extraordinary European failure in the lands of Islam. In World War II an elderly English gentleman of long Persian residence was asked by our Embassy in Teheran to draw up a list of Persian notables likely to favour our cause and influence opinion. He drew up the list, but no action was taken on it, as all the persons mentioned were found to be dead. He should have been commemorated in some way, as a symbol of the wrong approach, when he followed his notables to the tomb. I am his successor. I am dangerously out of date. Whatever I may say about Persia should be treated as suspect. I belong to the vanished age of Reza Shah and the chaos following his abdication. I have been to Persia since, but my mind is conditioned, is essentially, so far as Persia is concerned, as shut to change as I cannot but wrongly suppose, deep down in my being, Persia herself to be. And yet, knowing all this, I helplessly surrender at moments such as the present to the impulse to impose my ideas, to buttonhole the world. I am seized by a passion to prophesy whenever Persia is in the news.

In my day Dr. Moussadek was very little known. I do not remember hearing his name between 1930 and 1942. But General Zahedi became famous. In 1942 he was the military Governor of Isfahan, and prominent in the country as a Nazi sympathizer. This will be held against him, I doubt not, by many worthy people here in the days ahead, but to be a

THE NOT-SO-CHANGELESS EAST

Nazi sympathizer in Persia in the thirties and forties was no great sign of wickedness. The Persians had never seen the darker side of the German character; they saw the Germans as admirable suppliers of machinery to their new factories, as the efficient organizers of the first civil aviation service, as incomparable archaeologists, as people with a clean record in their Persian dealings, unlike some others. As Aryans they liked the Aryan teaching. Far from the horrors of Belsen, patriotic Persians who hoped for a new and better age often hoped for a German victory. Among these men General Zahedi took energetic steps to further the German cause. News of this came to the British Consulate in Isfahan. It was agreed that General Zahedi had better be kidnapped. Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean happened to be around, so he did the kidnapping. Four years later General Zahedi was Governor-General of Fars. He said he had no bitter feelings about the past. "I lost that rubber," he said, "I have been dealt a new hand." If the British really esteem a sense of humour they might find things to enjoy in General Zahedi.

He may last a short time, he may last for decades; all may be better,

worse, or just the same, soon or never. Permanent buildings are rare in Persia, and are often removed for political or even odder reasons. But I will make one prophecy with certainty. It will be believed through all Asia, from the Mediterranean to India, that the Zahedi Coup was arranged in the British Embassy in Teheran. The Abbé Barruel (late eighteenth and early nineteenth century) was, I think, the inventor of the Conspiracy view of history. He thought that everything that happened was due to Freemasons. Most of his successors switched to Jews or Catholics, and in America they are opening new wings for the theory's accommodation. But in Asia and South-east Europe, Jews, Catholics, and even Communists have small reputations for plotting compared to "*your wonderful Secret Service*." In Persia our Embassy is the acknowledged centre (not the Foreign Office), and so deep is the belief in a hidden British omnipotence that even Reza Shah gave occasional signs of supposing that he was a British agent, and I dare say old Moussadek did so too. The belief is a bore when it lands innocent travellers in gaol, but it was of priceless value as a propaganda piece in the Dunkirk period. It is strengthened by our immense output of detective literature; it has the power to convert most Frenchmen and some Englishmen, and has been known to find expression in the columns of *The New Statesman*. General Zahedi has opened a beautiful new field for the exercise of this remarkable idea, which I am certain will never undergo change until Persia loses her passion for the dreamlike, for the poetry of unreality, and for the baseless fabric. Changeless . . . changeless . . .

CHRISTOPHER SYKES



"Sixpence in those days would buy twenty cigarettes, two ounces of tobacco, two pints of mild beer, two quarts of milk, a dozen eggs and a half a hundred-weight of coal." — *Daily Express*

They were the days, all right.



ON A PERSIAN SEE-SAW

Boswell on the Grand Tour

FREDERICK THE GREAT UNVISITED

The first of a series of extracts from the latest volume of the Private Papers of James Boswell*



In July 1764, Boswell, then rising twenty-four, visited Germany and began a round of the Courts. He was well provided with introductions and felt himself a success at most of them, but his highest ambition, to be presented to Frederick the Great, was never realized. The efforts he made to achieve this end were tireless and unhampered by any excess of reserve. On July 31 he wrote to Henri de Catt, Reader to the King :

[c. 31 July 1764]

I TAKE the liberty, Sir, of writing to you. I hope that you are completely recovered and are able to enjoy again the good fortune for which I envy you so much. Yes, Sir, I am not ashamed to confess my envy of a man who spends his hours in the company of the King of Prussia.

I have already told you of my enthusiastic wish to be presented to your monarch. I am not quite so easy to please as the English knight who made the trip from London to Potsdam solely to see the King, and when he had seen him on the Parade, went quietly home again. I am like the ancient philosopher who said, "Speak, so that I can see you." I have already had the honour of seeing His Majesty two or three times. Imagination may do much, but I am sure that he has an aspect of superior guise. Upon my soul, I was struck. He

electrified me. Every time I looked at him, I felt a shock of the heroic. You, sir, whose blood does not circulate so rapidly as mine, may laugh at a stranger. No doubt I seem to you like a child who gazes open-mouthed at a picture of Alexander or Julius Caesar. Well and good. I am willing to keep something of the spirit of childhood. Ah, dear Sir, it is a pleasant age: one feels then in full force that admiration which to my way of thinking is one of the most agreeable of passions.

I am not satisfied with having seen the King. If it is possible, I should like to hear him speak. Mr. Mitchell gives me very little hope of succeeding. On the road here, I said to my worthy conductor, Lord Marischal, that it was a great pity that the King did not have the lesser vanities as well as the greater: that he did not like to show himself in person to strangers as well as to make his brilliant conquests. My Lord replied that if the King had been in love with little things, he would not have accomplished great ones. Nevertheless, it is a real loss to the rest of us and especially to me, who in a sense flatter myself for feeling such admiration for him. The sage said, "Οὐχ εἴμι σοφός ἀλλὰ φιλόσοφος." It is certain that I am not a great man, but I have an enthusiastic love of great men, and I derive a kind of glory from it. I am told that at least I can sometimes conceive an idea of greatness of soul. How many fine things should I not do if I were not hindered by the fear of appearing absurd! How often should I not follow the lively inclinations that come into my mind! Do you know that one evening at Charlottenburg I was very near the King in the garden and that I felt a powerful impulse to throw myself at his feet and risk telling him how much I had wished to see His Majesty? But I thought a little, and my heated imagination cooled. Yet I am sure that I showed something of unusual agitation, for General Wyllich said to me with a serious but cordial air, "Calm yourself, Sir." I shall not forget that little anecdote. I am truly the old Scottish baron: I might have said the old feudal baron. I am haughty towards the tenants on my estate. But for a superior like the King of Prussia I have prodigious veneration. Do not reason with me. What I am describing to you is a fixed sentiment. I find that sentiments firmly impressed have much more power than arguments proved up to the hilt, and it is to sentiments that I always return.

What makes me wish still more to see your monarch and what makes me still more regretful that the pleasure is so difficult to obtain, is that I know the Philosopher of

*To be published in October by Heinemann

Sans Souci so well. Am I not reading him every morning? Has he not fired my soul? Have I not criticised him without ceremony? Are you aware that he has perhaps no greater admirer and no freer companion than myself? Are you aware that he has done me real good, that he has often roused a noble ambition in a heart, alas! too pensive and listless, and that I feel for him much sincere gratitude? I shall not cite passages. It is not necessary to advance proofs. But may I tell you also that I would give a great deal if my royal Philosopher had not written the epistle to my countryman, Marshal Keith? Is it possible that he entertained such thoughts at one moment of his life? Where was that *sentiment* which is so dear to me? How could he uphold the gloomy doctrine of annihilation and at the same time show the fire of an immortal spirit? How striking a paradox! Dare I say that it is a piece of philosophic coquetry, exactly like that of a woman of extraordinary beauty who looks at you and, as she shows you her charms, says, "No, I am not good-looking at all"? Ah, no, great King! You shall never be destroyed. Not only shall your name live for ever, but your soul shall be immortal too; and I shall certainly speak to you in the other world, though I may not in this.

After several further attempts to get himself presented by orthodox means Boswell tried shock tactics:

FRIDAY 21 SEPTEMBER. The whim struck me to put on a blue bonnet and appear quite a Scots gentleman. I went in this dress to the parade of the Prince of Prussia. The Prince observed me and asked Scott, "What is that little cap which that gentleman is wearing?" Scott said, "It is the kind of cap which Scottish gentlemen wear." The poor Prince did not like it much, nor could he think that he was a lord's son who wore it. No matter. I was pleased, and boldly did I march upon the Parade before the Palace, where I again saw the King. But he did not look towards me. However, I was pleased to have shown the first blue bonnet on the Prussian Parade. I dined heartily at honest Scott's, and supped too. I was healthy and cheerful, and just Father.

At Wittenburg, Boswell visited the tombs of Luther and Melanchthon:

SUNDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER. . . . I was in a true solemn humour, and a most curious and agreeable idea presented itself, which was to write to Mr. Samuel Johnson from the tomb of Melanchthon. The woman who showed the church was a good obliging body, and very readily furnished me with pen and ink. That my paper might literally rest upon the monument, or rather the simple epitaph, of this great and good man, I laid myself down and wrote in that posture. The good woman and some more simple beings gathered round and beheld me with wonder. I dare say they supposed me a little mad. Tombs have been always the favourite resort of gloomy, distracted mortals. I said nothing of hot-headed Luther. I only mentioned the mild Melanchthon, and that at his tomb I vowed to Mr. Johnson an eternal attachment. This letter must surely give him satisfaction. I shall not send it till I see if he gives me a favourable answer

to my two last letters. It is really an excellent thought. The letter shall be a valuable remain.

At the court of Baden-Durlach, Boswell was received with an exceptional cordiality of which he was not slow to take advantage:

FRIDAY, 16 NOVEMBER. . . . Since I have been in Germany it has been my ardent wish to find a prince of merit who might take a real regard for me, and with whose ennobling friendship I might be honoured all my life. I pleased myself with thinking that among the variety of princes whom I intended to visit such a one might be found. After having been at a number of courts, I had almost given up my idea. At the last court but one, my utmost wish has been fulfilled. I have found a grave, a knowing, and a worthy prince. He has seen my merit. He has shown me every mark of distinction. He has talked a great deal with me. Some days ago, I said to him, "Is it possible, Sir, that after I am gone from this I may give you any mark of my gratitude?" He answered, "I shall write to you sometimes; I shall be very glad to receive your letters."



The Prince of Baden-Durlach has an order to give. He creates Knights of the Order of Fidelity. They wear a star and a ribbon hanging from their necks. My Lord Wemyss has this order. I fixed my inclination upon it. I was determined if possible to obtain it. When the Prince honoured me so far as to grant me his correspondence, I thought he would surely grant me his order. I asked him once *en passant* if only counts could have it. He said, "It is enough to be a good gentleman." Münzesheim had told me that the Prince was a little nice in giving it. This being my last day here, I was presented to take leave. The Prince said, "I cannot ask you to stay longer, as I am afraid you would tire." I said, by no means, but I was a little hurried at present, and would return again and pass a longer time. I then took courage and said, "Sir, I have a favour to ask of you, a very great favour. I don't know whether I should mention it." I was quite the courtier, for I appeared modest and embarrassed, when in reality I was perfectly unconcerned. He said, "What, Sir?" I replied, "Your Highness told me that a good gentleman might have your Highness's order. Sir, might I presume to

ask you that, if I bring you proof of my being a very good gentleman, I may obtain the order?" He paused. I looked at him steadily. He answered, "I shall think of it." I said, "Sir, you have already been so good to me that I flatter myself that I have the merit for obtaining such a favour. As to my rank, I can assure you that I am a very old gentleman" (some days ago I had given his Highness a history of my family) "and it may sound strange, but, Sir, I can count kindred with my sovereign from my being related to the family of Lennox and the royal family of Stuart. Sir, I am one of your old proud Scots. If you grant me this favour, you will make me happy for life, in adding honour to my family; and I shall be proud to wear in my own country the Order of Fidelity of such a prince." He seemed pleased. I said, "I hope, Sir, you do not take amiss my having mentioned this. I was anxious to obtain it, and I thought it was pity to want what I valued so highly, for want of boldness to ask it." He said, "Let me have your genealogy attested, and when you return, we shall see." Oh, I shall have it. I took leave of his Highness with much respect.



"Well, y'know, when you've been back'ards and for'ards twice a day for thirty years you pick up a few words of the lingo . . ."

"A LITTLE MUSIC OUT OF DOORS"

"I DON'T know whether you often go to Kew Gardens?" said the novelist.

"Once," I said, "in a lilac noon."

"I find it very conducive to my work. I go there with a little leather case containing sandwiches and a bottle of good wine, and—well, the implements of my trade. There in those groves of Hibiscus and Cytisus, of Pepper and Judas, of Parrotia and Ginkgo, of Liquidambar and Crataego-mespilus—"

"Please," I said, "please."

"—I find it easy to conjure up any background, any local colour that I desire. When I have spent the morning writing, preferably near the edge of the water, I take my lunch and go to sleep for an hour or two, leaving plenty of crumbs on the grass. I tell you, I have often woken up and found myself surrounded by a whole parliament of exotic geese and foreign water-fowl standing round in a circle, waiting apparently for their President's word to begin a debate, and looking for all the world—"

"Don't go on," I implored him. "I know exactly what you were going to say."

"And behind them, more timid perhaps, there would be bald-headed coots with their dark green legs. But I was going to tell you about a special occasion. I worked hard. I lunched. I slept. I woke. I fed my geese. I finished my wine. The Gardens were strangely deserted on that August day, and only down the long avenues you would sometimes see glimpses of light-coloured summer draperies, giving the effect of a Claude, and there was a sultry stillness, which I find it rather difficult to describe, and a sort of gloom as though one was wearing darkened spectacles. A mystic hush, as though all nature were awaiting—"

"Quite," I said, fearing the worst.

It came.

"Suddenly there was a high shrill piping which thrilled me to the depths of my being—now loud, now soft, now near, now far. Sometimes it seemed to come from the Pagoda, and sometimes again from that green plot in front of the glasshouse where stand the statues of the Garden Gods. Or again from the temple of Aeolus on its little hill, or the vine-trellised cafeteria, or even from the rushes by the water-side. And, of course, I knew what it was."

"I bet you did," I said.

"But there was another strange thing. All over the Garden there was a bustle of uniformed keepers running this way and that, peering behind bushes, scampering madly between the trees. Even the men on the motor mowers left their machines and seemed to join in the search. And then I was conscious of a man who had come up quite close to me unawares. There was nothing eerie about him. He looked like a retired colonel, and had a white moustache, and was dressed in a pale suit of gaberdine.

"You are wondering," he said to me, "but it has



"He's been fighting that young ruffian next door again."

happened before. I live here, and I should think I've heard it half a dozen times on days like this, when the Gardens are fairly clear. They never find him, you know. How could they?"

"You mean—?" I asked him. He looked so sane, so utterly matter of fact.

"Of course I do. I've known it come from the Dutch House where George III used to live with all that crowd of kids, or again from the palm house, or the rock garden, and then again it will be right in the middle of the rhododendrons, or the bamboos. My wife has heard it, too. She was almost as startled as when she suddenly met a Royal Personage near the Cottage, and didn't know whether to curtsey or not, because it somehow seemed a queer thing to curtsey all alone in a wood. But, of course, she did, and received a smile and a gracious nod. However, that's not the point. We were talking about this strange piping sound. The keepers always go rushing about when they hear it. They have their duty to perform, you know."

"Their duty?" I said.

"Look at the notices by the gate," he told me, "when you are going out."

"So I did, and, of course, it was immediately plain. 'Rule No. 15. No person shall play any game or music in the Gardens or bring into the Gardens any equipment or apparatus therefor,' and it was printed in big letters on a big placard as well: 'ALL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS ARE PROHIBITED.' I had often wondered vaguely how the staff employed itself on quiet days. But it was rather strange, don't you think?"

"Not," I said, "if it was a really good wine."

EVOE

2 2

"For sale, Beach Hut at Brightlingsea, centre of children's paddling pool." *East Anglian Daily Times*

Is the drawbridge in order?



Holidays in Britain.

Pleasure Course

IT is eight minutes to eight in the morning, and we lie awake, tensely awaiting our awakening by the radio. In one minute precisely it bursts into song encouraging us with a wheedling, feminine lilt to

*Roll out of bed in the morning
With a great big smile and a good,
good morning,
Get out with a grin . . . Wake with
the sun . . . Cock-a-doodle . . .*

Tension relaxed, we turn over and try to sleep once more, through the news that there will be moderate visibility in the Orkneys, with a prospect of showers later. Failing, we turn with resignation to our tartan-patterned enamel flask, hired from Sheila the Receptionist at a shilling a week, and pour out our early morning tea.

Seven thousand others are doing the same. The course has begun. Once upon a time, in this camp at Filey, they trained pilots to fight, those Few who thus saved the Common Man for his very own Socialist century. It took a capitalist, a Mr. Butlin, to go one better, to introduce the Millennium of the Common Man, at ten pounds a week for half a million of the Many each year, in camps at Filey, Skegness, Clacton, Ayr and Pwllheli, all reconvertible overnight should it unaccountably end.

Meanwhile here we are lying in bed, in it, drinking our tea in a luxury chalet, embarking on a week's course of training in pleasure, learning to live, for the first time, life as it isn't, life without tears.

This millennium is based on twin foundations: the public schools for the hell of it, Hollywood for the fun of it. Rolling finally out of bed, in our house without housekeeping, we proceed to the baths, where "Gents" and "Ladies" have become "Lads" and "Lassies"; and thence, after shaving to music, to a multi-coloured dining-hall, where we sit down to breakfast fifteen hundred strong. As we do so the "Mayor" of the camp trounces us playfully on the head with a rubber truncheon, and then sells by auction the chairs on which we are sitting and the plates off which we are about to eat. We

do this heartily, despite him, all arrayed uncommonly in multi-coloured shirts and pants and prints, and waited upon, with many a smile, by girls in ginghams and bright plastic aprons (dispensing service without tips).

Suddenly there is silence for the House Captain, a clean-limbed youth in a scarlet blazer studded with Butlin badges, and a rainbow-striped school tie. "Call me Dennis," he says. This is Gloucester House, and we are invited to pull our weight in it, join house committees for the various contests, score all the points we can, and get the cup back from Kent House. Breezily we are addressed by other "Redcoats," prefects without canes in a school without lessons. Then, all together please: "Hi - de - hi, ho - de - ho, 2 . . . 4 . . . 6 . . . 8. Whom do we appre-ci-ate? G..L..O..S..T..A, Gloucester!"

Life in the millennium is, in theory, one long game without rules. Butlin the capitalist knows very well that if you lay down rules for the British they break them. But if you don't they make them. Thus presently lads and lassies alike are enlisting gratuitously in this team and that, submitting themselves joyfully to a competitive routine, cricketing and tennis-playing, boxing and whist-playing, footballing, netballing, basket-ball, treasure-hunting, looking beautiful and even looking ugly, all for the honour of the House and in an unCommon spirit which would have surprised and perhaps pleased Dr. Arnold.

Everyone in the millennium must know everyone else. So after chapel in the Gaiety Theatre—voluntarily and largely attended, with prayers for sunshine—those who know no-one proceed to elevenses at the One Alone Club, coming in one by one and going out two by two. A nice girl called Kay, in a blazer, won't let them away until they know someone, suggests ways—like joining committees for a natter each morning—in which they can meet twenty new people a day, warns them against fun and

games in the chalets (for the first week), then mates them up and packs them off with a pat on the back and a laugh.

Meanwhile thousands have mustered on the green, for P.T. without effort, followed by a grand march-past without a battle. House bands playing, house banners flying, house songs ringing down the North Sea breeze, they march between mammoth beds of flowers without weeds, in perpetual bloom, shown off by the Camp Controller with the pride of the owner of a dream stately home. They march through a Peter Pannish Paradise, where kiddies by the thousand play, without tears, in a Never-Never Land of roundabouts and swings and fairy castles, drive trains around somnolent dolphins in beds of geraniums, or drop in to hob-nob with other kiddies at the Butlin Beaver Club ("always as eager as a beaver").

They march past a swimming pool as blue as the Mediterranean where, in waters without a chill, Venuses and Adonises from Bradford and Halifax, Middlesbrough and Sheffield, Leeds and Hull, bronze limbs without a flaw. They march past shops without queues where gifts may be bought, Sunday papers or even books, aids to beauty or plimsolls, swim-wear for the beach, underwear for the chalet, chrome and brassware for the home. For the "not-so-young" there are "quiet lounges," havens of rest, and for the tots, besides nurseries and playrooms, such amenities of the millennium as infant feeding centres,



"And this one shows the man-hours wasted by Statistics in computing the man-hours wasted by Planning in estimating the man-hours wasted by Co-ordination . . ."

nappy service, pram hire and a bottle preparation room.

Throughout the day, the prayers for sunshine answered, there is training in various forms of pleasure: a tea-dance or a coffee-dance, a Ramble to the Happy Valley or a Bike Hike to Hunmanby, a mammoth competition to choose a Holiday Princess. Bashful beauties are driven into the ring with encouraging spanks, presented by the House Captains, and judged by a panel of unimportant visitors politely introduced as important. The winner, a shorthand-typist from Chelmsford, wins points for York House, and the judges win points from the crowd as they embrace her.

A prize is then offered, "by kind permission of the Wigan Skin and Bone Yard," for the knobbliest pair of knees in the camp, and won by a

factory hand from Manchester, gaining points for Kent House, and proudly revealing that it is his fourth Butlin win. On Tuesday there will be a contest for male "Tarzans," at the swimming pool, which the padre's wife has kindly consented to help judge.

Each evening, in two theatres, there is four-times-nightly variety, entertainment without paying, clouded only by an occasional notice flashed on a board: "Baby Crying in Chalet L 22 SW." Afterwards, in dreamlike, mammoth bars, lads and lassies enjoy luxury without wealth. All alike are labelled with inn-signs, in tasteful English lettering. But even the genus Common Man contains species aspiring to be less Common than others. Thus they reflect subtle differences of atmosphere.



"Oh! I beg your pardon."

In the Pig and Whistle, the English coaching inn as olde as only Hollywood can make it, with overhanging latticed windows, a real well with real water, and half-timbering cunningly contrived out of chocolate-coloured plaster, one species sings loudly in its shirt-sleeves. In the French Bar another species sings less loudly, often in jackets and sometimes even in ties, enjoying the amenities of abroad without foreigners in a décor of *Folies*, apéritifs and bistro and other such hints of Parisian vice. A more selective species frequents the Harvey Club, "a luxury drinking warren and secret gossip centre," where amber lighting, rubber flooring and chromium plating transform lassies and lads into exclusive "Rabbits," smartly hatted and suited, drinking multi-coloured cocktails and "real champagne" at 4s. 9d. the small bottle.

For eating there is salmon salad for one species amid the tropical seascapes of the Caribbean, fish-and-chips for another, amid the draped fish-nets of the Lobster Pot. For dancing there are two mammoth ballrooms, one in the Luna Park, Regency style, and the other Viennese, festooned with vines, emblazoned with Hapsburg coats-of-arms, and complete with an Old Vienna Hollywood set. Here a House Captain called Desmond, affecting a Yale accent, directs English country dances, billed as American square ones. Here lads and lassies, gents and ladies, dance the evening away, until Mr. Harry Roy and his crooners bid them

*Good night, Campers, I can see you yawning,
Good night, Campers, see you in the morning,
You must cheer up or you'll soon be dead,
For I've heard it said folks die in bed.*

The millennium is over. Tomorrow we revert to this all too Common Century. KINROSS

6 6

"Derbyshire, First Innings—Hamer, b Watt (Glasgow), had twenty-two trout (14 lbs.); Devereux, 44; Kelly, run out, 8; G. L. Willat . . ."—*The Scotsman*

Anybody drooned?

LICENCE—AND LIBERTIES

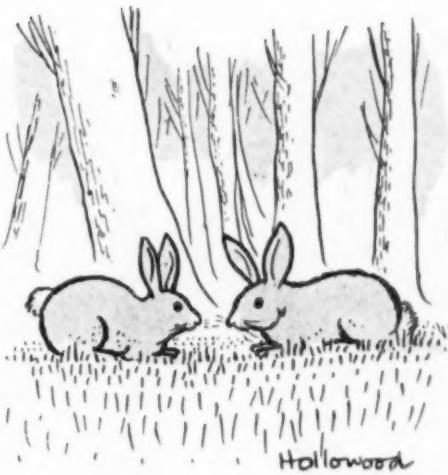
An Open Letter to the Chief Officer of the Public Control Department, L.C.C.

SIR,—I wonder if you can snatch a minute or two from your arduous task of controlling the public to accept a bouquet from the undersigned controller?

Correspondence between us hitherto has been cordial but restrained. Once a year you send me a brief note to remind me that my licence to drive a Motor Vehicle will shortly expire, and I, in my turn, remind *you* (in BLOCK CAPITALS) that my Christian names remain unaltered, that I am still living at the same old place, and that I have once again kept out of the police courts for a whole twelvemonth. I am also able to assure you that I have retained my health and limbs during the same period, am no more prone to suffer from giddiness, and can read the Highway Code at a distance of twenty-five yards. Then you very kindly send me a licence to drive absolutely anything—except Public Service Vehicles (which I never touch) but *not* excepting tricycles not equipped with means for reversing (which I haven't got)—and there, I am sorry to say, the matter rests. I keep *meaning* to write and thank you for accepting my word about epilepsy and so on, but somehow, year after year, it doesn't get done.

This year, however, though we are only half-way through our normal negotiations and I still await the licence, I really must address a public word of appreciation to you and your Department. It has always seemed to me extraordinarily civil of you to send me the annual reminder. After all it is up to me to know the licence renewal date; and you might very well (if you were like some bureaucrats I know) send the note to the police instead of to me, informing them that you had heard nothing from me so far, that my registration number was so-and-so, and that on and after such-and-such a date it might be worth their while to hold me up and take down a few particulars; at worst, it would give the coppers something better to do than ordering drinks after hours in night clubs and trying to buy tickets in privately-hired coaches. But you do nothing of the kind—and I love you for it, sir. You *notify me*. And *this year*, not only do you send me the usual friendly reminder, you send it *with the form for renewal of driving licences printed on the back!*

This procedure—so economical of paper, so trouble-saving both for me and the Post Office, so out-and-out sensible—may not seem to you, with your flair for the decent, obvious thing, anything to crow about. If so, that is simply because you have no conception how other Departments (and I don't mean L.C.C. Departments: I mean Government Departments designed to *serve* the public, not merely control it as you do) go about their business. I don't know whether you have ever tried to export pianolas to Nicaragua . . . No? Well, neither have I, to be honest. But my bet is that if you ever felt the need to do such a thing and



"You don't have to believe everything you read in the Kinsey Report, you know!"

applied to the Board of Trade for permission, the reply you would get would be a letter telling you to apply for application forms, but *not* telling you where to apply for the form on which to make your application for application forms. Of course, I write in ignorance and may be being extremely unfair to the Board of Trade. But they will be used to that. The point I am trying to make is that in the world of public Departments you, sir, stand alone—above criticism. God bless you!

Your sincere admirer,

H. F. ELLIS

P.S.—Just got my licence, thank you—together with the following note from you, printed in small type on a blue leaflet:

Every person to whom a licence is granted shall forth-with sign it in ink with his usual signature, and if he fails to do so, or if on production of the licence to any person entitled to demand production thereof such licence does not bear his usual signature in ink, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding £5.

*With the Compliments of the Chief Officer
of the Public Control Department*

Permit me to say that I am quite capable of signing my licence in ink without any damned nurse-maiding from you, and if I have any more of your insolent threats I shall hand the whole correspondence over to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who will know how to control Public Controllers.

With my compliments, of course.

2 2

"Welsh Corgi (Pemb) puppies. Sire Champion Knowland Clipper; dam my show bitch Connorsk Red Vixen . . .—Vicar, Glyndfrdwy, Tel. 201."

Advertisement in Llangollen and District Tuesday Review
Let your yea be yea.



"... and then the family portraits in the Long Gallery had to be sold."

W.H.O.'s WHO

THE World Health Organization, which has as its simple and staggering objective "The attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health," is quartered, very pleasantly, in the *Palais des Nations* at Geneva.

The overwhelming halls in which the hopes of Europe expired in the 'thirties are kept in perfect, elegiac repair by stealthy gangs of Swiss workmen; the office windows present lake and mountains to the doctors at their desks; the lifts are quiet and gentle; and there are three restaurants, a cinema, a bank, a bar, and a bookstall full of American detective stories.

The book-covers, bright with blood, blade, and body, are the only items of clinical interest in the building. Here is medicine depersonalized, a matter of maps and statistics, practised at its most effective and its most pathetic. W.H.O. counts its patients in millions and its diseases by epidemics, but if anyone breaks an ankle on the glazed marble stairs from the Assembly Hall they have to send out for a doctor.

What does W.H.O. do? It sprouted in the jungle of international initials at the end of the war, it is a specialized agency of United Nations, and it has eighty-two member countries. This figure includes ten "inactive members"—the Russian band long ago attempted to leave, but were thwarted by the absence of any provision in the Constitution for resignation and have since stayed at home and refused to pay the subs. W.H.O. co-ordinates quarantine regulations, standardizes statistics and drugs, advises careless countries how to keep their drains in order, and is conducting an overdue campaign to obliterate malaria, tuberculosis, and V.D. It also keeps an eye on infectious diseases from anthrax to yaws, and sponsors a World Influenza Centre fittingly situated in London.

The Organization is administered mainly by doctors, through a secretariat fringed with experts. The

medical staff is conscientiously picked from all the member-countries, a principle which has the hampering effect of a similar ruling about the English counties imposed on the Test selectors. Doctors differ; and the ornament to the profession on the Equator may not measure up to practitioners bred in the more chilly and critical climate round the North Sea.

But the wide range of recruitment has the compensation of sweeping lively personalities and bright faces into the corridors of the *Palais*. Hot-eyed South Americans, uncooled by Geneva's altitude, stalk the chic Génevoise secretaries; stony-faced North Americans, ties as bright and distinctive as their national flag, argue confidently from their notebooks that drug addicts will be wiped out by 1956, alcoholics a year or two after. Mercurial Iberians doze comfortably through committee meetings, until the arrival in the public gallery of a party of tourists or a girls' school brings them to their feet to deliver a blazing speech—which may affect for many years the health of some meek and unargumentative corner of the world. The girlish secretaries are mostly recruited from the Republic of Ireland, and the friendly Dublin voices on the telephones are closely mimicked by Greeks, Brazilians, or Pakistanis anxious to take advantage of their job to assume the correct British accent. The British themselves maintain an amiable insularity, and wonder how the devil the place would get along without them.

There is a faint air of frustration about W.H.O., as inseparable from any international undertaking as the smell of ether from the operating theatre. There is lobbying and bargaining, buttonholing and back-slapping, as briskly as in any other committee-ridden body. In the main entrance hall, suggestive of engines and booking-offices, delegations and commissions from W.H.O. and other organizations roam unceasingly. Knots of defiant females, fresh from the Commission on Womens' Rights, elbow through a group of Central

Americans on their way to the Committee on Alcoholism; stolid trade unionists, strayed from the International Labour Office, jostle with the representatives of African Midwives. Gossip spins easily, and the reputations made at Geneva are not all medical ones.

How much does W.H.O. cost? For next year, eight and a half million dollars. Dirt cheap—no more than a large city spends yearly on its sanitation, according to Dr. Brock Chisholm, the last Director-General.

And who pays W.H.O.? You do. The British contribution to its budget stems from your taxes. But the happy British doctors in professional exile in Switzerland, worried with neither night calls nor the National Health Service, draw their salary in dollars and pay no income-tax at all. RICHARD GORDON

2 2

"To emphasize the shape of the eyes, pencil in a fine brown line along the lower lids, actually following the growth of the lashes. Mascara must be made into a nice creamy consistency and lower lashes made up as well with lemon curd and ice the top with lemon water icing, or sprinkle icing sugar on top—unless they're too sparse, in which case . . ."—*Greenock Telegraph*

Thanks, that's enough to be going on with.



Modern Types**MR. MURGER**

MR. MURGER is going to do something really "creative" as soon as he finds the time. Neither he nor his friends, with whom he discusses this project at great length, doubt that he has the capacity to bring off something "really big" which will make a considerable stir.

These discussions take place at the most incongruous hours—in the middle of the morning, when most other people are working, or in the middle of the night, when most other people are sleeping. They generally occur in public places, in bars during licensing hours, in cafés and teashops and at coffee stalls. Mr. Murger has a room where he sleeps and changes his clothes, but he rarely spends any time in it except for these purposes. His hours for sleeping, like his hours for eating, are bohemianly irregular. He is employed by the B.B.C.

The Latin Quarter around Portland Place echoes continuously with the names of the most recently appreciated poets, painters and composers. Mr. Murger and his friends are "up" on the very latest things in the arts and "down" on everything except the very latest. Since the work for which they are engaged is seldom concerned with the very latest, they have a fine contempt for their superiors in the hierarchy who decide on the programmes and for the public whose taste is meant to be considered, and who are envisaged as dull and timid, sheep-like and smug.

It is not so very many years since Mr. Murger ceased to be an undergraduate, and he still dresses as if he were one, in sports jackets and corduroy or flannel trousers. His hair is inclined to be tousled and is not so much long as seldom barbered. He has abandoned the slight affectations to dandyism which he showed while a student. He walks with a slouch.

When he talks about his art he is inclined to raise his already rather high voice and to use a certain



amount of gesticulation. He has a very full knowledge of the technicalities of composition and performance, and is unsparing in his use of the specialized vocabulary developed to describe these minutiae; concessions, he feels, should not be made to listeners too ignorant to grasp the finer points of his expositions.

Art and, in second place, alcohol are what he really cares about; but he has misread enough psychology to realize that he owes it to himself and to his future public to have a "satisfactory sex-life." Unfortunately the purlieus of Portland Place do not seem to abound with the gay little midinettes and willing artists' models who should provide this essential service; and although occasionally secretaries or assistants would not be unwilling to play a role in the life of a future genius, they demand rather more time and attention than Mr. Murger is willing to concede to them. Consequently his "satisfactory sex-life" tends to be rather furtive and intermittent; but Mr. Murger perseveres, sustained by his high sense of moral duty. He doesn't enjoy it much.

Mr. Murger would, however, be willing to put up with even greater inconveniences to sustain what he

considers to be his appropriate rôle and to distinguish himself from the common crowd; he is sometimes tempted to refer to this crowd as "philistines" or "the bourgeoisie," but he manages to restrain himself; both these terms are deplorably dated, and Mr. Murger is nothing if not contemporary. This term has considerable plus value for Mr. Murger and his friends; it might almost be said that although all living people are in one sense contemporary, he and his friends are more contemporary than the rest. As a contemporary, Mr. Murger has more interest in philosophy and ethics than in politics; he makes free with the language of mysticism; and although at the moment he does not practice any religion, he is prepared to become a convert at some future date. Meanwhile, he feels bound to lead a moderately dissolute life.

There is no occupation or way of life open to him that Mr. Murger would prefer to the one he has chosen to lead; but he cannot help occasionally feeling disgruntled that he was not born twenty years earlier; or, more precisely, that the economic situation is not the same as it was a generation ago. He ought to be able to live in Paris or the South of France; he has no expensive tastes (though the heavy imposts on cheap drinks makes life in England costly) and he could then have enjoyed leisure on very little money. Without leisure how can he realize his promise?

Mr. Murger has been promising for several years now; five years ago he was even tipped as "very promising." He will continue to be promising for a number of years more. With ordinary luck he has at least a decade during which he will be very completely informed on all the latest developments. But the probability of the promise ripening into performance is not very great.

GEOFFREY GORER

ε ε

"The Fellowship has been in being for eighteen years, and during this time very few meetings have been held with no one present."—*From a parish magazine*

As far as is known, anyway.

A HOUSE OF REST

WHEN all the world she knew is dead
In this small room she lives her
days,
The wash-hand stand and single bed
Screened from the public gaze.

The horse-brass shines, the kettle sings,
The cup of China tea
Is tasted among cared-for things
Ranged round for me to see—

Lincoln, by Valentine and Co.,
Now yellowish brown and stained—
But there some fifty years ago
Her Harry was ordained.

Outside the church at Woodhall Spa
The smiling groom and bride—
And here's his old tobacco jar
Dried lavender inside.

I do not like to ask if he
Was "High" or "Low" or "Broad"
Lest such a question seemed to be
A mockery of Our Lord.

Her large grey eyes look far beyond
The little room and me
To village church and village pond
And ample rectory.

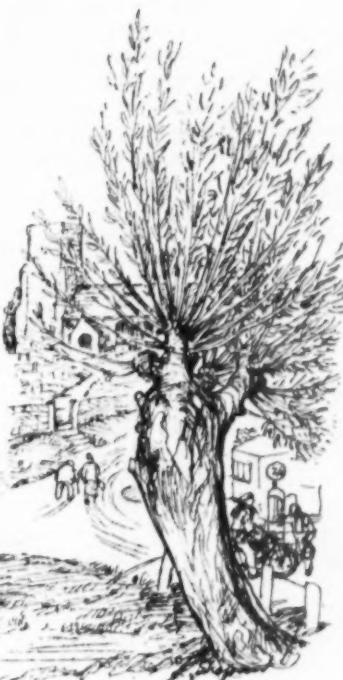
She sees her children each in place,
Eyes downcast as they wait,
She hears her Harry murmur grace,
Then heaps the porridge plate.

Aroused at seven, to bed by ten,
They fully lived each day,
Dead sons, so motor-bike-mad then,
And daughters far away.

Now when the bells for Eucharist
Sound in the market square,
With sunshine struggling through the
mist
And Sunday in the air,

The veil between her and her dead
Dissolves and shows them clear,
The consecration prayer is said
And all of them are near.

JOHN BETJEMAN



NIPPON CELEBRATES

CHERRY blossom viewing is perhaps inevitable in a country where great swathes of landscape billow with white foam for a brief period each spring. Moon viewing calls for a keener sense of appreciation. Nearer to the Equator moons are bigger and brighter than in Japan, but people do not organize parties to look at them. Highest in all the hierarchy of aesthetes, however, must be those who listen to the buds opening.

"Some of them," said a keen listener, gesturing delicately with his finger and thumb, "give a gentle *psst*. Others"—he parted his half-cupped hands perhaps a quarter of an inch—"are more explosive. *Pat!*" And this, mind you, in a country where the clamour of motor horns and booming of public-address systems suggests to the visitor an absolute insensibility to noise.

These enthusiasts are sincere, but their tastes are perhaps a little rarified for the masses. In any case the masses must take their pleasure gregariously and where they can find it. Affectionate young couples, mothers with babies on their backs, fathers towing leaden-footed tots, ferocious young men with rucksacks and mountaineers' boots, students in their serge uniforms, and school-girls in sailor suits, crush themselves

with grim-faced determination and a minimum of courtesy into the long coaches of the electric trains. They carry cameras, fishing rods, portable gramophones, and bundles tied up in rayon crêpe squares. Those who have been fortunate enough to get seats step out of their shoes and sit very comfortably on their feet.

For refreshment on the journey they buy bottled beer, bottled *sake*, bottled milk, bottled coffee, bottled cider (a sickly confection owing nothing whatsoever to the apple), tangerines in little string bags, peanuts, chocolate, toffee, dried fish, and hot green tea in little pots whose lids can be used as drinking bowls. In ten minutes the floor looks like Piccadilly as the Coronation crowds broke.

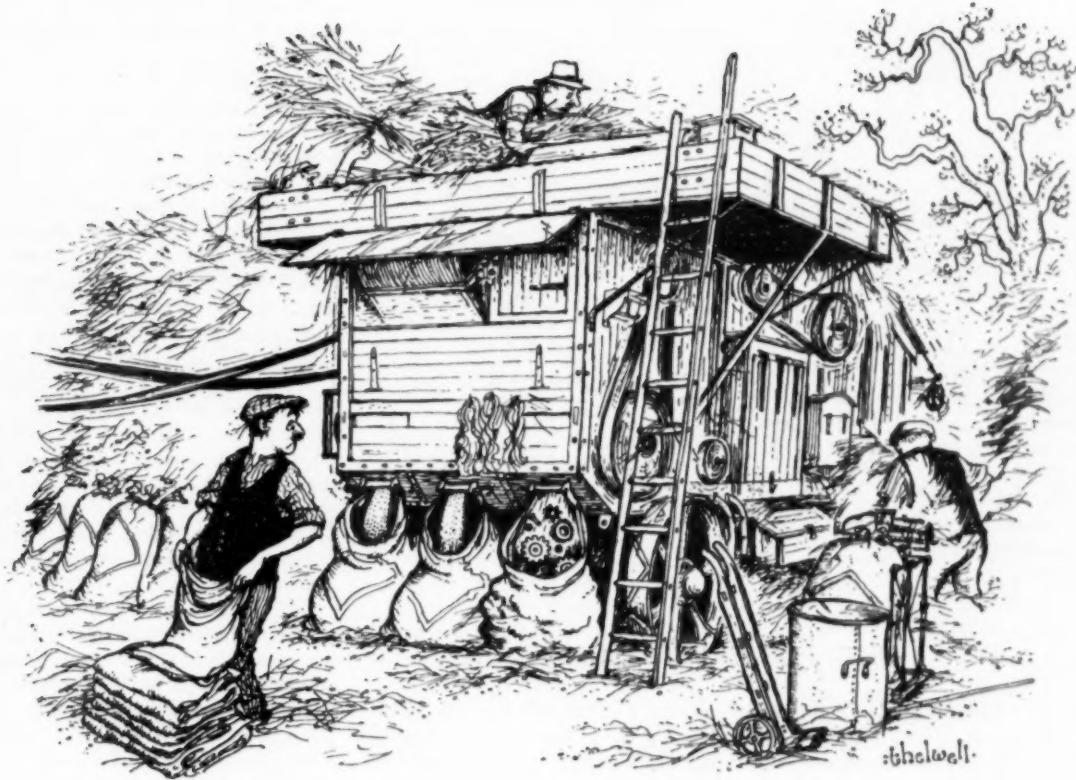
Into this mêlée steps the train's conductor, who removes his cap and gives a perfunctory bow. "Messrs. Everybody," he announces in formal style, "this is the Tokyo to Ito semi-express. We arrive at Yokohama at ten-thirty-one and leave at ten-thirty-two. We arrive at Ofuna at ten-thirty-nine and leave at ten-forty. We arrive . . ." He takes them all the way down the line. If the train is a special for a particular resort he describes the beauty spots to be seen on the way down. What he says is of comparatively little

importance, for nobody listens anyway. The babies demand their usual attention—Japanese children seem to be less exacting than British—the lovers smile at each other, the talkers talk, the sleepers sleep, and the rest read paper-covered romances. The *tantei mono*, as they call the mystery story, has never obtained the stranglehold on Japan it exerts here. So the conductor thanks his patrons, resumes his cap, and goes to try his luck in the next coach.

The same thing is happening in a hundred trains, while in ten thousand motor coaches little conductresses are bidding their passengers have a care while the vehicle takes a corner, wait please till the traffic light changes, and sit tight over the bump at the level crossing. The view is being described and a wealth of information given in a high, tinny voice apparently essential for the task.

The coaches sway and career along lanes which grope through defiles or hang precariously to hillsides. There seems hardly room for one diesel goliath to move, but two will meet head-on and squeeze through somehow. The conductress leans out and sings "Oh-ri-i-i, Oh-ri-i-i, Oh-ri-i-i" for the driver's guidance, and wheels mash down the bank or cling desperately to the rim of the mountain road. When it is over the conductress apologizes for the delay, and they go on. No one seems to think the business at all risky.





So they arrive at the beach, the lake in the mountains, or—a particularly Japanese feature—the hot spring. Bathing in hot water is in any case a frequent habit, and, if the hot water gushes, full of health-giving salts, straight out of the hillside into the bathroom of an hotel fitted with the necessary holiday concomitants—ping-pong tables, western-style dance floor on which the guests may boogie-woogie in stocking feet and kimono, and long verandas on which to enjoy the view and cold beer—well, so much the better.

But not everybody goes to the hotel, just as not every visitor to Brighton goes to the Metropole. Parties settle on the beach or under the trees. The bundles are untied. Out come the *bento*, little oblong boxes filled with rice, vegetable, and fish, or perhaps small balls of rice wrapped in seaweed. After use the boxes are thrown away, together with other relics of the feast, orange

peel, banana skins, caramel cartons—anything, in fact, which can add to the litter.

If it is on the beach, one bathes. If it is by the lake, one hires a small boat, or else perhaps takes the steamer across to the other side, to the accompaniment of "Buttons 'n Bows" belching from a loud-speaker at the mast-head. If it is in the mountains, one might eat eggs boiled hard in the sulphur spouts.

Wherever it is, one takes photographs. A trip without photographs is just no trip at all. So one poses the group against the biggest and shiniest motor car in the vicinity, and especially one parked against the suitable background, Mount Fuji, say, or a corner of Lake Hakone. Then the ladies of the party will probably wish to be taken, one or two at a time, with hand poised on the door-knob or leaning negligently against the coachwork.

On returning to the coach, which has been standing in the sun all day,

the internal temperature will be found to be at least 120° Fahrenheit. "O honourable Messrs. Long-waiting!" apologizes the conductress, who, of all people present, is the least responsible for any delay. The coach sways back to the station, or takes its place in the procession cracking and pulverizing the surface of the main road back to town.

And the litter at the resorts is left flapping in the breeze and fading in the sun until next week-end's crowd arrives to cover it up with more.

JOHN NOTLEY

2 2

"Miss Churchill is devastating in a devastating skit . . . She makes a little tragedy of the song about the night club attendant whose lover marries a younger man who resembles her as she once was."

Revue notice in The Taller

As she was, that is, before she shaved her moustache.



THE 1928 EXPEDITION

I WAS kicking my heels about in Auckland, New Zealand. I was twenty and had knocked around most of North and South Islands. I was fed up with sheep and public libraries and wanted to do something big. Bronzed explorer stuff. I looked out over the blue sea and went over names like Popocatepetl and Phnom-Penh. Treasure trove, idols with green eyes and veiled women undulating to the sound of gongs. I decided to explore the East Indies, Indo-China, and finally China itself.

I visited the offices of the Auckland *Weekday Announcer* and *Clarion* and asked to see the editor. "Well," he said, "what can I do for you?" I explained my project. "Very interesting," he said, "and what will be your means of locomotion?" "My feet," I replied. "I will try to live like a native." "Very commendable," said the editor, "but what precisely have we to do with this project?" "I want your paper to pay for the trip in return for articles I will write en route."

The editor explained that the circulation of the paper hardly justified such expense. However, he would be pleased to consider any

articles I cared to send him. Then I went and cabled my parents: FORWARD MONEY FOR EXPEDITION TO PHNOM-PENH.

Eventually I set off by ship to Sydney. I stayed there a few days, living in lodgings in Manly. It was like the area around Victoria Station, except that there was the sea, and people's voices whined like buzzsaws. In Sydney the grass in the parks looked like burnt toast. I secured a berth on a Dutch steamer bound for Sumatra, Java and Singapore. I made up my mind to break the journey at Sourabaya and go native in Java for a few months, as a sort of training for the more arduous part of the expedition in Asia. Just before the boat sailed I sent off my first article to the Auckland *Weekday Announcer* and *Clarion*. When I was asked to fill in a form at the Purser's office I wrote "Author" under the heading "Profession."

The boat, the *New Amsterdam*, was as smart and compact as a cocktail cabinet. The passengers were mainly oil men and rubber men, huge colonials with quiet, understanding wives called Gwen or Norah. The men stamped all over

the decks, downed rivers of alcohol, and roared whopping lies at each other. In the evening they played bridge, Gwen and Norah permed up and coping with it all. The boat sped up the coast and the first excitement I had was seeing a fish with a square face stand on its tail and collapse into the water. It was about the size of Westminster Abbey.

Unfortunately I was the only person who actually saw it. I rushed into the lounge and told some rubber men. One of them biffed me on the back, gave me a double whisky, and said it was a dinkum whacker. Later we sidled past the Great Barrier Reef and up into the Gulf of Carpentaria. One night I was leaning on the rail, gazing into a misty darkness, when I smelt spice. At the same moment a lonely bird called. I knew it was calling to me from a timeless magic island somewhere out there in the mist.

I shared a cabin with a paroled murderer from Sydney called Smith and an elderly Chinese gentleman who reeked of perfume. The Chinese gentleman was abnormally shy and hid under the bed-clothes. Smith, after years of enforced celibacy, was planning an erotic campaign, a sort of Operation Eros. He explained details of this to me while we walked the decks. In return I explained my expedition, but he didn't understand it.

When we arrived at Macassar the oil and rubber men swarmed out of the boat, jumped into rickshaws, bought bottles of beer and smashed the place up. The minuscule world of small craftsmen sitting outside small shops, hammering silver and gold, cowered as the giants went by. Small women like dwarf chrysanthemums fled in panic, crying "The rubber men are here." And I was in with the rubber men. I couldn't escape, even though I wanted to be on the other side. Faster and faster we went, and the little people ran harder, and the bells rang and the hammers fell and there was panic in fairyland. Looking back now, I can understand the Eastern problem.

Our next call was Sourabaya, in Java. I would get off the boat here and go native. But the officials

wouldn't let me enter because I hadn't got enough money. I pointed out that I was writing for the Auckland *Weekday Announcer and Clarion*, but it made no difference. I would have to wait until I got to Singapore. The boat stayed in Sourabaya one day, so I decided to have a look at the zoo. I hailed a carriage and said "Zoo" to the driver in Malay. I had learnt a few words from a phrase-book. The driver whipped up his horse and drove to the outskirts of the town, pulling up in front of a long low house with a deserted garden. I looked at it in amazement. I had never seen a place less like a zoo.

"Zoo," said the driver, pointing at the house. I clambered out of the carriage and walked towards the building. The door opened, and six or seven small faded women appeared, like withered leaves. They surrounded me, rustling and sighing, and pulled me towards the door. There was a sense of acute desolation tinged with sandalwood. "No, no," I cried. "Good-bye." I returned to the driver and shook my fist at him. "Zoo," I shouted. He shook his head

and pointed back to the house. So I stood in the road and roared like a lion. Then I flapped my hands and gave a sort of squeal. At last he seemed to understand and drove off to the real zoo.

We reached Singapore. This was my jumping-off place. From here I would set off into the unknown, leave civilization, and become a native. But the same thing happened as in Sourabaya. They wouldn't let me leave the boat. I hadn't any money. So I had to return to Sydney as a guest of the Dutch Government, on the s.s. *New Rotterdam*. Again I saw Sourabaya Zoo. Again I helped to smash up Macassar. When I reached Sydney I had sixpence in my pocket. I wrote my report to the Auckland *Weekday Announcer and Clarion*, boarded a tram to the outskirts of the city and started walking north again. ANTHONY CARSON

2 2

"FUEL BAR ON SHIPS TO CHINA"
Singapore Free Press

Large firewater, please.

HERBERT MORRISON

I would die for Parliament. I have an enormous admiration for it.

Mr. Herbert Morrison

O HERBERT, at thy window be,
Blythe frae the stour o' public
fame!

O gin that thou wadst gladly dee
To keep the cry of "Wha Goes
Hame?"

Though this wa' brent, and that
wa' bla',
And yon, they thought, was comin'
on,
I sighed and said "Aman' them a',
Ye arena' Herbert Morrison."

O Herbert, men ha' died for luve,
And men, maybe, ha' died for pelf,
And gudness knaws that, wi' a shuve,
Why, ony man micht shoot hi'self.
But for to lay him doon and dee
For Parliament—O there's a one,
A thought ungentle canna' be
The thought o' Herbert Morrison.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

*Stour: dust, turmoil
Brent: smooth, un wrinkled*



"It could have done with another ten minutes in the oven."

Landscape With Forks

I had been walking round gardens and a lake, and there was the bright little pavilion with tables on the grass where I could enjoy lunch.

Well, perhaps not quite enjoy, and not lunch but a snack. After all, this was the Home Counties. If the elms and the hosses and the very clouds were English, English also would be the fare. Or British, as we say defensively.

British food! Such a trying summer it's been for everyone, what with the weather and the celebrations and litter and so many kindly

but sharp-palated strangers about, and food, always this business of food. There was ewe; the word got people's goats. Then someone came back from Monte Carlo having spotted, within a dice-throw of the Casino, "Baked Beans on Toast, 150 francs: English Spoken." We could afford to laugh over that, I hope. The A.A. members weren't so funny; they objected, you remember, because English hotels are starred irrespective of kitchen. This has always been so, like ewe, but the papers made rather a fuss.



Why, this very morning—it comes back to me munching pie in the sun—the following item leapt at me out of the *Daily Telegraph*.

"HARPS AT MEALS"

The first word of advice given to Welsh hotel-owners and caterers for the enjoyment of a traditional meal appears to be 'first catch a harpist.' The Wales Gas Board has distributed a booklet on old Welsh dishes which can be offered to visitors to the Principality.

Whether it is to be leek broth, laver bread made of edible seaweed, cockles, Ffest y Cybbyd, the miser's feast, Snowdon pudding, Ponco, Slapan, or Crempog cakes with a welcome cup of 'te' the booklet gives this advice: 'The harp can provide the perfect accompaniment to a good meal.'

This is panic. No need to give way so openly.

But from the seaside comes a wail of "Rain, rain, fly to Spain" (if it would or could!), followed quickly by "Gravy, gravy, run off to Djibouti," and "Dreadful mattress, get along with you to the Tatras," and, most abiding, "Dinner bell, dong in H—." Those of us who, under various excuses, have remained locked in our castles, experience qualms and guilt.

Do we grow over-self-conscious? Is our food getting worse?

I don't honestly think so. Considering the lettuce on my plate, I reflect that once it would have been outside leaves. Now it's middle leaves. In time—these things must come naturally—we shall arrive at hearts, as also perhaps at edible cabbage and new peas. Distraught, I feed pie to the sparrows and pigeons that accompany every Englishman as gulls do a tramp-steamer. They hop over my shoes and perch on a chair-back. Winds frisk over the water, chestnuts rustle, an empty ice-cream tent flaps its stripes, and the few persons at table look strangely out of season and off beat.

It's the wrong hour! Come back for tea and the whole thing will be different: to the trickle of the little stream will be added tinkling spoons, boards will be heaped and families reunited, everyone will be smiling and greedily in tune with the hoop-necked swans, the guzzling aphis, the

cows knee-deep under apple-trees. Lifted for a moment will be that spirit of deep unenjoyment which broods over us, the sense of the lean gut in a lush landscape. Much of our yearning for the countryside, and for spoiling it, has slopped over, I believe, from an unrequiting plate.

Tea! I'm hungry for it already, a saturnalia of shrimps, jams, watercress, strawberries and cream, boiled eggs, little pancakes and pies, cakes, scones, and such surprises as only the cook and the conjurer can realize. I'm letting myself go, no doubt, but if there's one thing we *do* know how to spread ourselves over it's tea.

Lunch and dinner (why go on pretending?) we might as well rule out at once; they are mere ruins of a lost art, of passion fled. Two meals a day suffice for most civilized people, who also work harder than we. Our other meal would be breakfast, a revived breakfast with three courses and more, to which once again one could invite friends. So we might hope to repair a damaged reputation. The more daring might take chances, too, with an occasional fish supper.

Then, to clinch matters, why not a Cookery Test on the lines of the Driving Test? Nobody could serve a meal in restaurant, café, or hotel without having passed; and a couple applying to get married would automatically produce, along with birth certificates, a cooking licence. The casualty figures of our dining-rooms, if they could be ascertained, would show that the moment of real danger is not when we step off a kerb. "Smells good": famous last words.

Meanwhile, frightened by my own proposals, conscious of having violated in thought all decency, I wander off ravenously into woods that look, oh, so good from here.

G. W. STONIER

2 2

Letter from a Subscription Department:

"We trust that the issues of 'Coming Events' which you have received during the past months have persuaded you that life without this journal would be intolerable; that it would be like a ship without a tail or a bird without a rudder."

Or a Department without a Subscription.



"Someone has fainted!"

NO BALL

Any cricket match, anywhere

ONE after one they moved this way and that,
Lifted, and turned, and swung; one after one
He prodded with a stiff, unyielding bat,
Or left alone, or covered up. No run.
A trifle late, he stopped the next one dead,
And tapped the next one out towards extra-cover:
"Again, no run," the commentator said,
"And that is yet another maiden over."

"No ball!"—And he forgot the bowler's tricks,
The crumbling wicket; strong, with fearless eye,
Square open shoulders, freed from anxious care,
He smote; a glorious full-blooded six,
Storming the changeable and cloudy sky,
Fell like a meteor through the startled air.

G. H. VALLINS

COME INTO THE MUNICIPAL GARDENS, MAUD

COME into the Municipal Gardens, Maud,
For the hushed immutable shrubs
Are calling, calling over the girdled sward,
And beauty and truth are glued together in tubs.

Come, for in every ambit lies
A laurelled calm and promise-laden paths
Do beckon to the local bridge of sighs
But bring one baffled **TO THE PUBLIC BATHS.**

By privet glade and ivy-strewn retreat,
Sweet summer thoughts, to nature's moods related
We two may share till by and by a seat
PRESENTED BY MISS HOPCRUST is vacated,

While down the dells where, like a thing from Liszt,
The wren records how sylvan and serene it is,
THE PUBLIC ARE REQUESTED TO ASSIST
IN THE PROTECTION OF THEIR OWN AMENITIES.

This is the public's garden, this most junior
Shoot, this age-old **CEANOTHUS RIGIDUS**,
This patriotic whirlpool of petunia
Belong, for we are public too, to us.

This is our **CUPID** and our craggy border,
Flaunting (it hardly seems like us) no weeds,
NO CLAMBERING ABOUT THESE ROCKS. *By Order.*
NO CYCLING AND NO DOGS EXCEPT ON LEADS;

And popular for tender reciprocity
(Against those ravaged walls what hearts have thrilled!)
Our shelter this—**BUILT BY THE GENEROSITY**
OF MEMBERS OF THE BOILER-MAKERS GUILD.

From hence the shelterer to southward glancing
Sees his own bandstand, gorgeous but refined,
LICENCED IN PURSUANCE OF ACT OF PARLIAMENT FOR MUSIC,
SINGING & DANCING OR OTHER PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT
OF THE LIKE KIND;

Sees too, perchance, his evergreen **ATTENDANT**
And notes what near-oblivion he achieves,
His pippin face alone at times resplendent
Amid those dim-lit patent-leather leaves,

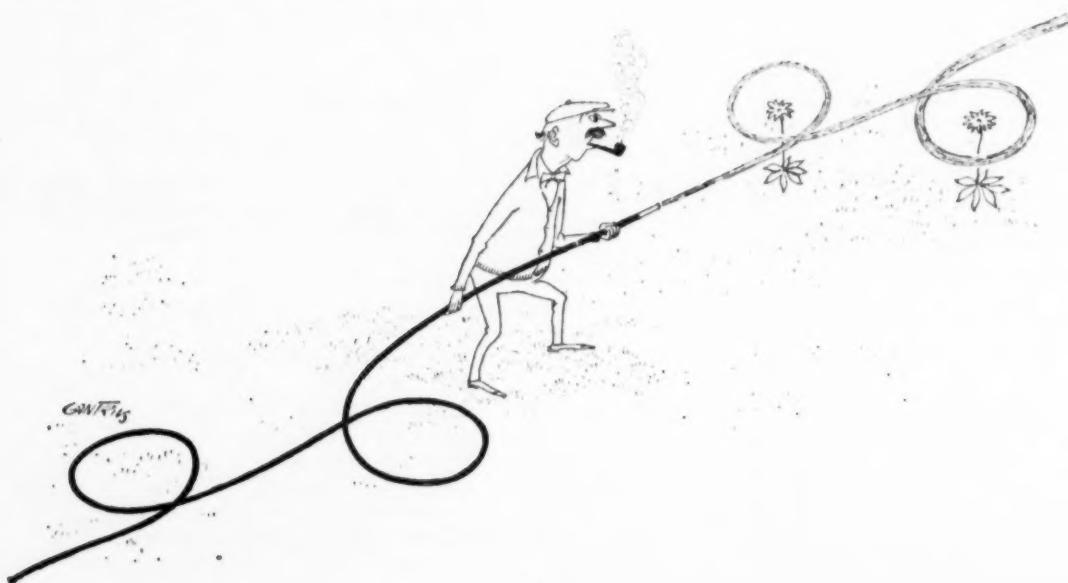
And in a blaze of molten beauty yonder,
ADJACENT TO THE RECREATION GROUNDS
Look, Maud, the lake where fancy ducks do wander
And fitfully unloose their fussy sounds.

There goes our **BLUE-WINGED TEAL** (*Querquedula discors*)
Dunking its brilliance in the deep unhidden,
While coots leap up amid their own applause,
But for us owners **BATHING IS FORBIDDEN**,

And lily buds like blobs of sugar icing
Twitch when a brace of golden carp collide;
How marvellous it is! And how enticing!
But **PLACE YOUR LITTER IN THE BINS SUPPLIED.**

Too soon the stars have pinned their diadem
Across the pool and, oh, the notice board
Cries that **THE GATES WILL CLOSE AT 9 P.M.**
Come out of the Gardens on to the Golf Course, Maud.

DANIEL PETTIWARD





"Hallo! There appears to be some writing in the corner."



CRITICISM



BOOKING OFFICE

Sir (Now Shri)

Nehru, the Lotus Eater from Kashmir. D. F. Karaka. *Derek Verschoyle, 10/-*

WHEN, in the middle 'thirties, I was living in Calcutta, I used to consort a lot with Bengali intellectuals, who were, indeed, the most diverting company in that somewhat sombre town. We used to agree that the worst feature of the British Raj was not its much advertised brutalities, which, as such things go, were really decidedly mild, especially by comparison with the standards set by the dictator-demagogues of our time like Stalin and Hitler, not to mention the immense and bestial slaughter when Mr. Nehru took over. Its most unfortunate consequence, as far as India was concerned, was that the Raj imposed its own character on those who resisted it, even more, if anything, than on those who collaborated with it. To make matters worse, there was a time lag. The resisters were not only *ersatz* but obsolescent.

Thus, Gandhi belonged to a Tolstoyan-Unto-This-Last tradition which, except for a few rather absurd bearded characters going about in knickerbocker suits, was already extinct in the West. Likewise Tagore, an Oriental William Morris, produced in his Santiniketan community a kind of belated pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. A visit to Santiniketan was, in any case, a memorable experience—those shaven backless heads transplanted from *Nacktkultur* on the banks of the Rhine, and now bent, Swami-wise, before the great Rabindranath; those withered ladies in unaccustomed saris tending their spinning wheels as

best they might; those eager dhoti-clad Rupert Brookes and Naidu poetesses; those tuneless voices bravely greeting the dawn, and then the words of the Master himself at



eventide, banal to the point of making Mr. Anthony Eden seem a Voltaire and Lord Waverley a veritable Oscar Wilde.

Indian politicians, again, provided a notable example of how it was possible to become a burlesque, or *reductio ad absurdum*, of what they so fervidly denounced. It must surely amuse some Gibbon who,

centuries hence, looks back quizzically on this strange time, to note that the last dying echo of Gladstonian liberalism was to be heard in, of all places, an Indian legislature—brown, gesticulating men in white *kadi*, speaking over-idiomatic English in quick accents, and after their fashion keeping alive an oratorical tradition which, elsewhere, was either expiring or had quite expired. There may, too, well seem a certain poetic justice in a grotesque image of parliamentary government thus surviving to mock the original in its decrepitude.

In this connection there was one scene whose contemplation never grew wearisome—the opening of a meeting of the Indian National Congress, with green flags unfurled, and Jawaharlal Nehru mounted on a white horse, while tunelessly, barely recognizably, “The Wearing o’ the Green” was rendered. Mr. Nehru even then provided an almost perfect example of the shape of Sahibs to come. Since his accession to power this impression has been confirmed. Specimens of his recent oratory (shrewdly provided by Mr. D. F. Karaka in his vinegarish study of Mr. Nehru) irresistibly recall the late Ramsay MacDonald. For instance:

“Later the question arose about our being in the Commonwealth or not. Now, is it not a very different thing for the Republic of India, which has nothing to do with England constitutionally, legally, or in any other way except such normal bonds as two countries may have in the economic sphere or in the cultural sphere, whatever it may be, to decide to remain associated with England or with a group of countries without the least inhibition, without the least binding factor in it? . . . In what way, at any time, at any moment during the last three or four years, the fact of our being associated with the Commonwealth has affected our policy, or varied it this way or that in the slightest degree, I should like to know that (*sic*). I say,

therefore, it becomes purely a question, if I may say so, of acting in a sentimental huff . . ."

This might have come straight from Lossiemouth. It belongs, as MacDonald's own oratory did, to the last grey light of an expiring day. How brief, how transitory, will seem in retrospect the vapourings and posturings of Nehru and his colleagues, momentarily caught in the expiring rays of an alien power. How little will remain of their already dog-eared régime when history, as it soon must, has relentlessly elbowed it and them aside.

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE

Spoiled in the Cooking

Return Passage. Violet Markham, C. H. Oxford University Press, 21/-

MISS MARKHAM has been a housewife's daughter in the smooth elegance of a wealthy Victorian home, an active Asquithian Liberal in Chesterfield and London, a member of several Government Committees, Deputy-Chairman of the Unemployment Assistance Board and the centre of a wide circle of eminent friends. It is only to be expected that her autobiography should be almost unreadable.

Why cannot intelligent people with wonderful material at their disposal realize that writing an account of their life is a difficult and technical job? Surely, as a matter of courtesy to the reader, every page should offer literary quality or new information, preferably both. Yet how rarely public figures describe their lives with even bare competence. For some reason the nadir of any official autobiography is the chapter on the inevitable visit to Canada. One begins the book hoping that for once it will be skipped, but it never is. Judges and bishops are the worst offenders and by comparison Miss Markham is fairly succinct; on the other hand she visited Canada twice.

Yet how much she knows that has never been adequately written. She saw the evolution from the Voluntary to the Statutory of whole areas of social administration. She saw the professionalizing of the *grande dame* and her working alliance with the pioneers of women's industrial organization. She could have told us so much more about the early days of the National Council of Social Service or what it was like to collaborate with Morant, even at the expense of the chapter on her dogs. The right-wing public woman is rarer in print than her left-wing colleague and her evidence is valuable to historians.

Miss Markham grasps clearly that much of her work was choosing the lesser evil in a transitional period. She bore the brunt of the Labour attack

on the Means Test; but she defends the U.A.B. fairly convincingly on the ground that it was only administering compromise legislation which represented fumbling political decisions. The machine, as distinct from the policy, proved its worth when it was given its head in the War. Anybody who had experience of dealing locally with Government Departments found it the most helpful, the most enterprising and the most light-heartedly human. (The worst was the Ministry of Labour.) Its success was the result of administrative inventiveness, among other virtues, and on this neglected aspect of contemporary history Miss Markham must have copious and fascinating information.

R. G. G. PRICE

The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole. Frederick Rolfe, Baron Corvo, with an Introduction by A. J. A. Symons and a foreword by W. H. Auden. Cassell, 15/-

A new edition of the novel that describes its author's last years of squalor and horror in Venice. As a paranoiac Rolfe affords a classical example in his particular class. The late A. J. A. Symons' *Quest for Corvo* has given an account of his life, fascinating for that reason. But paranoia is not enough. Rolfe had a few good ideas (e.g. the theme of *Hadrian VII*) and a keen interest in language; but he had no grasp whatever of literary form, could not write dialogue, and did not possess even the smallest capacity for understanding other people's characters. These are three grave handicaps in a novelist.

Mr. W. H. Auden starts with the very reasonable statement that he cannot agree with Symons that the story is "exquisite" or "romantic" and he himself gives a good, stark account of the book as a kind of medical document. But in the end Mr. Auden, too, attempts to claim literary merit for Rolfe's neologisms and vituperation. That Rolfe was an

oddity no one will deny, but it is hard to see that he had any real gift as a writer.

A. P.

Materassi Sisters. Aldo Palazzeschi. Translated by Angus Davidson. Secker and Warburg, 15/-

This slight comedy about two ageing seamstresses in a village outside Florence who are charmed and robbed by their orphaned nephew is very leisurely, very consciously charming and very old-fashioned, though it was written only twenty years ago. Everything is described clearly and expansively and at first this extensive method seems a pleasant change from the density now fashionable, when phrases do the work of pages and bright ideas in epithet whizz past the eye so fast that the attention is driven off.

The trouble is that the material is far too thin for the pace to be tolerable. On and on the story trails, offering the mildest pleasures of recognition: yes, Italian young men do like sports cars and athletics; yes, Italian peasants are poor and American millionaires rich. It is rather like one of those foreign films that make one feel they have been made as foreign films. However, it might prove quite popular with the Occasional Reader.

R. G. G. P.

Pools Pilot. A. P. Herbert. Methuen, 6/-

Sir Alan Herbert's articles on the football pools, familiar to *Punch* readers, are here collected and expanded to make a complete *vade-mecum* for the punter. The conscientious reader should reap a double harvest, in fun and in dividends.

B. A. Y.

AT THE GALLERY

THE five hundred Old Master drawings on view at the Diploma Gallery, Burlington House (closed after October 25) cover a large field



from the Sienee fourteenth-century stiffly-carried-out silhouette of an archer to the nineteenth-century portraits and classical figures of Ingres. Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo are somewhat slightly represented for reasons explained in the catalogue.

We owe several advantages to the drawings as opposed to the paintings of the past; one being that drawings, in spite of their fragility, are less susceptible to chemical and other disturbances wrought by time, and are therefore seen more nearly as they were when executed. Further, in drawing, the artists of the past frequently spoke a more spontaneous and intimate language than when they had to come up to the conventional standard of finish demanded in commissioned paintings. A prime example may be taken from the drawings of Claude Lorraine in this exhibition, which show a direct response to a variety of landscapes and effects of light such as is not found in his paintings, however well composed. Again, the prolific genius of Rembrandt was able to overflow, speedily and profusely, into marvels of biblical illustration and landscape by means of pen sketches, on a few square inches of paper each, to an extent impossible to achieve with the more ponderous medium of oil.

The reputation of the short-lived Watteau would be almost as great as it were it supported on his drawing alone. Particularly exquisite in sentiment and execution are his study of a horse, after Van Dyck, a Man's Head—Number 3974—and "A Girl Seated"—Number 402—all carried out in his usual medium of black and red chalk. A comparable feathery lightness of touch is to be found in the Gainsborough drawings in the same room.

At the opposite end of the scale is an array of Italian works, admirable in strength and clarity, from Signorelli via Michelangelo and Raphael to Tintoretto, Andrea del Sarto, and Annibale Carracci; in these the theme is, generally, the glorification of the human body by emphasizing its strength and grace. Rubens, too, is akin to this group by temperament and among his drawings shown is the almost purely rhythmic delineation of the human body in "Venus and Adonis," contrasting with the very solid little figures in "Four Nude Females Grouped Round a Basin."

In the West Gallery devoted to the German, Dutch and Flemish Schools are, besides the Dürers (chosen to show his scope and variety) and the Rembrandts (all beauties), a host of works by minor artists worth much study. I instance "Rafts on a River at Prague," by Roelandt Savery, as a fine suggestion of space by almost imperceptible means. Excelling in this respect also are the Guardi drawings of the Lagoon (Number 173) and "A Puppet Show," in the East Gallery.

The inclusion of many drawings from Chatsworth calls to mind the large, unique collection of masterly compositions and studies by Inigo Jones which are there, and promotes the hope that one day they may be extensively represented in a show of such quality as the present one at the Diploma Gallery.

ADRIAN DAINTREY

AT THE PLAY

Anastasia (ST. JAMES'S)

HERE, in effect, is a Galatea with three Pygmals. She calls herself Anna Boun; she has been saved from suicide, and she is in a Berlin cellar (the period is sometime between the wars). About her are three Czarist exiles, led by a Prince Bounine, sinister and suave. Hers not to reason why; at the command of these men she is to become the Grand Duchess Anastasia, youngest daughter of the dead Czar, a *revenante* from the fatal Siberian cellar at Ekaterinburg in July 1918. How did Anastasia escape the massacre? That will be explained; all will be explained. She will marry her presumed cousin, Prince Paul; they will receive the remnant of the Czar's fortune; the Pygmals will benefit; and Anna-Galatea-Anastasia can settle (maybe) to long

life and happiness as the lost heiress of Imperial Russia.

That is the plan. It is described in the exposition of this ingenious claimant-play by the French dramatist, Marcelle Maurette, adapted now by GUY BOLTON. Claimants have always been serviceable in the theatre; this piece has the special merit that it is set in that sad make-believe world of the exiled Russians, symbolized by the papier-mâché throne hired from a film studio for the installation of the supposed Grand Duchess. "Oh, hollow! hollow! hollow!" as Bunthorne said on another occasion. And we borrow, too, from Gilbert those lines about Retribution, like a poised hawk, swooping down upon the Wrong-doer. We cannot believe that Bounine, the sleek adventurer who has devised the plan, will be allowed to get away with it. The chief flaw in any claimant-drama is that the ending must be inevitable. We know. The dramatist knows that we know. We are quite prepared to surrender for two acts, but how can a third be cooked to make it palatable in the theatre? The authors of *Anastasia* are in the usual spot; it is not my task to tell you what they do. I can hint only that the play, after being excellent wire-cored drama for nine-tenths of the night, slackens suddenly at the last.

Before then the problem of identity



Prince Bounine—MR. ANTHONY IRELAND

Anna Boun—MISS MARY KERRIDGE

The Dowager Empress of Russia—MISS HELEN HAYE

[Anastasia]

has become something that Pirandello might have liked. We begin to expect early that the woman who masquerades as Anastasia is Anastasia indeed; that the wandering enigma, so far from being Anna Broun of nowhere-in-particular, is the woman she is being taught to say she is: a Galatea impersonating Galatea. Is she, or isn't she? That is something else for a playgoer to decide. How much can she have been taught? How much does she know? The questions multiply: for once multiplication is not vexation—not, at least, until the dramatists must make their final count.

A lot rests upon the acting, and the play has been carefully cast. In the first act, a shrewd exposition which I found the best thing in the night, Miss MARY KERRIDGE can establish the potential Galatea: she comes as a godsend when the conspirators, sworn to produce an Anastasia, are without a candidate. This dazed, wan creature fits the measurements on the wall. She has even scars in the right places. A pity that she cannot speak Russian. Never mind: she will do. Miss KERRIDGE does richly, and she is better still in the second act when she wears the "Grand Duchess's" dignity with—we may feel—surprising ease. She is partnered here by someone who, according to the programme, is Miss HELEN HAYE—a pseudonym for the Dowager Empress of Russia. Here player has melted into part. The two actresses enjoy the theatrical scene in which the Empress is compelled to believe, against herself, that this is her granddaughter.

Mr. ANTHONY IRELAND, slippery-tongued, is the First Conspirator who neatly combines the qualities of adder and slug. And it is especially cheering to see Mr. LAURENCE PAYNE in the West End: he acts the kick-about of the three conspirators—Mr. PETER ILLING is the other—with quite uncommon art.

Recommended

The Two Bouquets (Piccadilly) as the blithest musical play in London; *The Mousetrap* (Ambassadors) for anagrammatists; and *Seagulls over Sorrento* (Apollo) as an Ancient Monument which is also an enjoyable theatre-piece. J. C. TREWIN

AT THE PICTURES



Little Boy Lost
The Red Beret

EVEN among the sympathetic, the immediate reaction to the news that BING CROSBY was appearing as the father in the film version of MARGHANITA LASKI's novel *Little Boy Lost* (Director: GEORGE SEATON) may have been surprise, not to say ribald surprise; followed by the assumption that there would be not much left of

the book but the title. But anyone who has taken note of Mr. CROSBY's extreme, apparently relaxed and effortless ease and skill in the dialogue small change of comedy must have realized that, like many another good comedian (like Danny Kaye, for instance), he could be a good straight actor if he liked. In this, his first "serious" picture, he does exceedingly well.

In a film with a big part for a nine-year-old boy of the talents (or sensitiveness to direction) of CHRISTIAN FOURCADE, that is saying a great deal, for it's axiomatic that children, like animals, are picture-stealers.

The story is of an American journalist searching after the war for his little son, whom he has never seen except as a baby. The chances are that the child is one of the boys in an orphanage in a small town near Paris, and for various reasons—no positive proof, but no negative proof either—he picks on one and tries to arouse in him memories that will settle the matter. After a preliminary series of flashbacks (illustrations, as in so many films of novels, of the narrative told by an off-screen voice) the main part of the film traces these efforts, as the man goes for walks with the boy, takes him to places and shows him things he might remember.

It's a situation bristling with opportunities for sentimentality, most of which have been commendably resisted; only the ending seems rather too easy, too plainly contrived to send the customers away smiling through their tears. The boy's performance is unerringly aimed at the springs of pathos (I put it like this to cover the fact that the director almost certainly did most of the aiming) and besides Mr. CROSBY's intelligent and expressive characterization there is a brilliant portrait of a Mother Superior by GABRIELLE DORZIAT.

Songs? Why yes, there are a few songs; but it's not that sort of picture at all.

No one has yet succeeded in thinking up a new plan for the straightforward war film; and probably for the war film that has to provide a principal part for an American star while telling the story of some essentially British war organization, a new plan would be altogether too much to ask. *The Red Beret* (Director: TERENCE YOUNG), which deals with the Parachute Regiment, contrives the usual kind of thing for ALAN LADD: the ex-officer who in his own country did something he wants to forget and is now a private ("from Canada"), looking gloomy and ready to sock anybody at the drop of an innuendo.

Apart from this thread of conventional fiction (there is a W.A.A.F. heroine too, who packs his parachute and critically watches what he does



Little Boy Lost
Man Errant—BING CROSBY
Boy Lost—CHRISTIAN FOURCADE

with it) the film gives quite an impressive picture of the training, fighting methods and general spirit (or *esprit*) of the paratroops. As shown at the Empire, it has the benefit (or distraction) of "stereophonic sound," as well as of the wide screen (which is good for such spectacular shots as the panorama of innumerable falling parachutes), but presumably you will have to do without one or both of these blessings when the picture reaches your local cinema. The battle scenes are well done and exciting enough to make it effective anyhow.

* * * * *
Survey
(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Another new one in London is *Always a Bride*, rather a misleading title for quite a bright British comedy about charming and golden-hearted crooks on the Riviera. *Roman Holiday* has arrived; and there are still the old faithfulness, *Adorable Creatures* (10/6/53), *The Beggar's Opera* (17/6/53), *Moulin Rouge* (25/3/53) and that cheerful musical *Call Me Madam* (5/8/53).

One outstanding release is *Genevieve* (10/6/53), excellent British comedy.

RICHARD MALLETT



ON THE AIR Screen Trouble

EVER since the earliest days of television, producers and cameramen have accepted as sacrosanct the principle that where two or three are gathered together on the screen they must stand or sit embarrassingly close to each other, cheek by jowl. When two people converse before the cameras they stand like contiguous straphangers or sit like lovers about to clinch. An armchair is expected to accommodate at least four people.

At its worst the overcrowding is such that the viewer's screen resembles a panoramic photograph of the whole school (with Miss Bonnet, the French mistress, third from the left on the fifth row); and at its best the unnatural proximity reminds us of advertisements stressing the unhappy social consequences of halitosis.

Originally this niggardly allocation of *Lebensraum* for TV performers may have been dictated by technical difficulties and the shortage of cameras, but if so the necessity soon became a convention and the convention one of TV's favourite bits of pictorial mumbo-jumbo. Even to-day we are frequently annoyed by this undignified jockeying for position . . . The host (or hostess) puts a question to the celebrity in town to-night and then distracts our attention by elbowing or worming his way into the picture and over the chalk-marks on the floor.

There are two reasons why this folly has persisted: first, because the TV theorists believe that the small screen must be filled chock-a-block to be properly appreciated, and second because they feel that to present a disembodied voice (*noises off!*) is to deprive TV of its one great advantage over "steam radio."

With these thoughts in mind it is

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Paterfamilias (in Wilton Place). "Beatrice, come closer, I want to whisper."

Beatrice (from Ceylon). "Yes, Papa dear."

Paterfamilias. "Who is that charming young lady playing on Charlie's side?"

Beatrice. "She's just come over from England, Papa. I'll introduce you to her as soon as the game's over."

difficult to know whether to praise or blame Geoffrey Moore who the other day produced a programme called "The Comics" and with it headed a revolt against screen congestion. In this half-hour of stilted discussion we saw six speakers—a chairman, a panel of four experts and a trans-Atlantic guest—in splendid, roomy isolation. Whenever they spoke they had the screen entirely to themselves: there was no bumping and boring, no buttonholing, no pushing and shoving. For all we, the viewers, knew, the members of the sextet might all have been in different studios: Kingsley Martin (avuncular and perseveringly dialectical), Mrs. Bower (tense and tireless),

Dr. Lewis, Marcus Morris (editor of *Eagle, Girl and Robin*), Mrs. Helen Bentwich, and an American publisher of "comics" were six separate voices crying in the wilderness, six morsels of still life that became animated from time to time like the statues in a panto "transformation" scene.

One result of all this was that the viewer had no idea how the speakers were disposed and therefore no idea who was being addressed; and this did nothing to improve the general air of confusion. There must, surely, be some happy medium between this new isolationism and the old unhappy overcrowding.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



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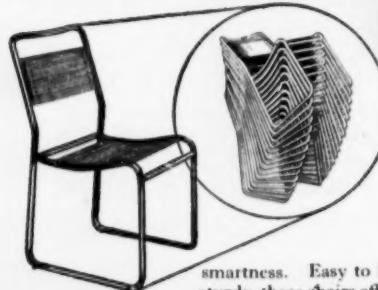
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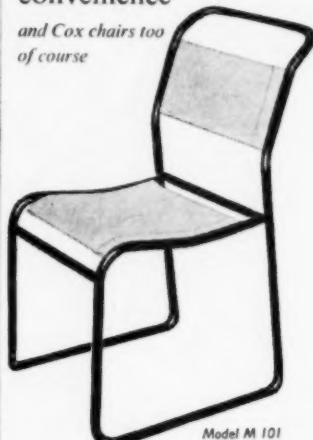
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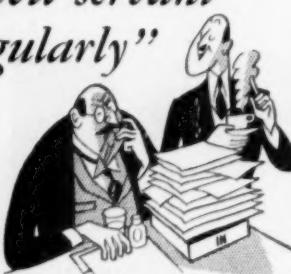
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